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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001933

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR CA/OCS/FROBINSON
STATE FOR EB/ESC/IEC/ENR/BLEVINE
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF
STAT FOR INR/AA
STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
STATE PASS TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
STATE PASS DOC FOR PHUPER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR CDUFFY
STATE PASS TDA FOR BTERNET
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2014

TAGS: [EPET](#) [EINV](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLS](#) [EWWT](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: TWO SHELL FLOWSTATIONS CLOSE AFTER SUSPICIOUS
PIPELINE EXPLOSION

Classified By: Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reason
s 1.4 (D & E)

Summary

1. (U) According to several credible sources, an unidentified group of armed men damaged a section of an oil pipeline in the Andoni local government area of Rivers State the evening of December 19. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) shut down two flowstations, producing 170,000 barrels per day (BPD), that were feeding into the now ruptured pipeline. SPDC hopes to repair the damage and put the stations back on line soon. The gang also reportedly deracinated several villages in the area after warning villagers to leave. Villagers maintain that eight people died in the attacks.

Attack Kills Eight, Destroys Barge

2. (U) Monwan Etete, chairman of the Andoni local government area of Rivers State, near Port Harcourt, reported that a gang of "militiamen" carrying explosives and guns and purporting to be members of Dokubo Asari's Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) appeared in his area around 9:00 p.m. on December 19 warning locals to leave their villages. By 9:30 the gunmen proceeded to burn down several villages until they reached the town of Opobo. They allegedly dynamited a section of oil pipeline, causing a large explosion and an ensuing fire, which continued to burn through December 21. During the evening, a Smit Company tug boat and an NNLG tanker were attacked, perhaps by the same or an affiliated group of marauders. Etete reported eight villagers died that evening.

SPDC Closes Two Flowstations until Fires Quenched

3. (C) Don Boham, Public Relations Director for SPDC, confirmed the company shut the two flowstations in order not to continue to feed the fire. He said the company had hopes to have the flowstations back on line before December 24. After a fly-by over the site on December 21, though, they determined the fire's intensity was too great and was not sufficiently contained to allow a repair team access to the ruptured pipeline. Consequently, their timeline for resuming operations will be delayed. He said no company personnel died, and he could not confirm the identity of the arsonists. SPDC has contacted the GON to ensure heightened security in the area. Flowstation closure will temporarily reduce production by 170,000 BPD, or about 7% of total production.

4. (C) Officials from the State Security Service (SSS) told an Exxon Mobil Security Advisor that the coordination of the attack and the inclusion of the SMIT tug and the NNLG tanker indicated gang or militia group involvement. Apparently, a statement was released claiming the attack was in protest against the impeachment and current criminal trial of former Bayelsa Governor Alamieyeseigha. Most oil companies and service companies we contacted believe there will be additional attacks.

Comment

15. (C) The explosion of the pipeline does not look like an oil bunkering attempt gone badly awry, according to credible sources. The attack and the destruction look purposeful. That the attack occurred with Asari in jail pending a treason trial and Alamieyeseigha's criminal trial just beginning cannot be viewed as mere coincidence. That said, we do not yet know if the culprits are one of the known militia groups or if a new brutal actor has emerged on the already violent scene in the Delta. The real question is whether this represents a symbolic, one-time show of destructive intent, perhaps in protest to the predicament of Asari and/or Alamieyeseigha, or if this is a harbinger of the future tactics of at least one Delta militia. If the latter, the question then becomes, does the GON have the ability to stop it.

BROWNE